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Your ref: HL74401/ASG/LS
Application No: GB 0004285.3
Applicant: Shell Internationale Research Maatschappij B.V.

Examiner: D.B. Pepper
Tel: 01633 814751
Date of report: 28 March 2003

Latest date for reply: 11 June 2003

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Patents Act 1977 Examination Report under Section 18(3)

Basis of the examination

1. My examination has taken account of the amendments filed with your agent's letter of 27 February 2003.

Plurality of invention

2. Your claims define a number of separate inventions not forming a single inventive concept. The inventions are:

- a) the apparatus for coupling a tubular member to a preexisting structure as claimed in claims 1 and 22 characterised by the first and second support members, manifold, expansion cone, tubular member, first, second and third interior chambers and shoe;
- b) the apparatus for coupling a tubular member to a preexisting structure as claimed in claim 23 characterised by the support and radial expansion means; and
- c) the apparatus for coupling a tubular member to a preexisting structure as claimed in claim 31 characterised by the release means, the coupling means, the displacement means and the exhausting means.

3. You will need to amend your claims, so that they relate to only one invention or inventive concept. Furthermore the detailed description should be amended to clearly indicate which embodiments lie within the scope of the invention; e.g. if claims 1 and 22 are retained and claims 23 and 31 deleted, at least figures 2A-O do not appear to lie within the scope of claim 1. You may wish to consider filing divisional applications. Any such applications should normally be filed no later than 3 months before the expiry of the period for putting the present application in order.

Scope of search

4. The searches to date cover only the first of these inventions. The other inventions can be searched if you wish under Section 17(8). In this case you will have to file a further Form 9/77 for each of the additional inventions to be searched.

What this report covers

5. I have not been able to consider the novelty or obviousness of the unsearched inventions.



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{ Examination Report contd. }

Clarity

6. The apparent statements of invention on pages 82-92 are inconsistent with the claims and should preferably be deleted.